



WDFW Enforcement Program Advisory Committee
January 24, 2009
1000-1500
Ellensburg, WA

Members in Attendance	
Ray Hansen	Gary Terrell
Dave Croonquist	Bob Holtfreter
Robin Hickock	Ron Oules
Jim Kujala	Ed Owens
Ray Boone	Jay Webster
WDFW Staff:	
Bruce Bjork, Chief	Sean Carrell, Problem Wildlife Coord.
Members Absent:	
Josh Pearson	

Chair Ray Hansen Convened Meeting at 1000

Reviewed minutes/requests from the October 2008 meeting. No additions or deletions suggested.

October 2008 Meeting Minutes Reviewed and Approved

Action items were passed out from October's meeting. Chief Bruce Bjork spoke about the decriminalization bill and discussed conversations from meetings with Representative Mike Armstrong. Ron Oules had a question reference infractions and tying that into the bill. Chief Bjork advised that it could. Ed Owens asked if the bill is still internal and whether or not he could introduce to others outside WDFW/legislature. Chief Bjork advised that this is not agency requested legislation and WDFW is not interested in moving this forward. However, when asked for recommendations, WDFW is required to make amendments when dealing with language added or dropped from any bill.

Introductions- Gary Terrell served 32 and half years in law enforcement. Dave Croonquist retired from Colorado Division of Wildlife. Bob Holtfreter is a teacher. New member Robin Hickock is a retired police chief of Edmonds and now lives in Moses Lake. Robin has worked with WDFW religiously over the years. Ron Oules currently serves as the Brewster Police Chief and wanted to be involved with the group. Ron is an avid hunter and fisher and works closely with WDFW Enforcement personnel in the field. Jim Kujala is currently active with the

outdoors and works closely with other hunting/fishing groups. Ed Owens, registered lobbyist, represents 113 clients in the natural resources arena. Ed has a close background with WDFW on other natural resources related issues. Ed's interest consists of everything that may affect WDFW. This group has been indispensable since it has given his constituents an understanding of how the Enforcement Program works. Ray Boone has worked for the state for 30 years in liquor control and parks. Ray now works for DSHS. Ray also serves on the Master Hunter Education Advisory Group as well. Jay Webster is retired from the forest service and has 30 plus years in law enforcement. Chief Bruce Bjork started in 1970 with WSP and retired in 1997 as the Assistant Chief. Bruce promoted to Chief of the Enforcement Program back in 1998 with WDFW. There have been a lot of changes in the last ten years and Chief Bjork has worked closely with ex-Director, Jeff Koenings. The advisory group has been really good for the program. Chief Bjork advised that the educational component and the outreach have been beneficial. Ray Hansen, chair, is retired law enforcement. Ray served 32 years with Thurston County Sheriff. Ray retired in 2005 as the Chief Criminal Deputy. Ray was a member of the joint terrorism task force, WASPIC, national sheriffs association, and has served on a number of other committees. Ray identified that the new members have three year appointments, while others in the advisory group have either one or two year appointments. Bob asked if the decriminalization bill had any chance of passing through the legislature. Ed advised that it would not pass in the current format. Ray asked what Representative Armstrong's position was regarding the bill. Ed explained that his ranking is not on the natural resource committee. Ray advised that Representative Armstrong is part of his district. Ray asked about the WSP cost savings list. Chief Bjork explained that the packet describes the program breakup and results of accomplishments within the program. WSP savings are on page 14 and graph 7.3 details radio usage and charges from July 05 to October, 2007. The charges are currently in \$20K range per month. WDFW contracts with WSP for emergency services. The radio contract was \$1 million, but now it a little less than half a million as a result of MDT's and other administrative cost savings. Ed suggested that this information be used. **Action item: Ed would like to send out this document to all his folks. Ed requests a PDF document.** Ray Boone asked about a breakdown of charges. Chief Bjork advised if there are data checks, WSP does not charge up. However, any click of the microphone and WSP charges WDFW. Ron advised that he knew that Enforcement used Okanogan County dispatch. Ron asked if we are still looking at county dispatching. Chief Bjork explained that negotiating with 39 counties is rather difficult, including inoperability with local systems. Robin asked how many transactions Enforcement may have at any time. Chief Bjork explained that there about 18,000 per month. Chief Bjork advised that Enforcement is absent a data management or record system right now. Ron asked if the record management system will be linkable with other systems. Chief Bjork explained that those systems would. Ron asked if there are questions where those can be sent. Sean Carrell explained that those can be sent to the enforcement-web. Jim asked if the questionnaire could be posted for new members to read because of

the issues that had been raised in the past about education of the public. Ron explained that this is necessary because there is still the belief of a “conservation officer.” Ed suggested that the Enforcement quarterly can be used in those situations where questions may arise on Enforcement’s role. Outreach and education are now an integral part of that report and it may be used to answer those questions. Ed explained that this is just one example of group’s activities and accomplishments. Chief Bjork advised that times have changed so much, so it is relatively new concept and folks are beginning to find the information. Jay talked about the reel news and Deputy Chief Mike Cenci’s contributions. Jay advised that it is well received. Jay also advised that there was a lot of animosity because of ignorance. Jay advised that the newspaper should be picked up more frequently. Ray asked if there any new additions. Ed asked that there should be something added, but it may be better served under the legislative topic. Bob commented on the survey results of the national review of hunters and fishers. **Action item - Ed asked that the internet link be sent to the group.**

New Business

Chair & vice-chair appointments - Ray asked about chair and vice chair positions and what was determined at the October 2008 meeting regarding new appointments. Chief Bjork advised that there was discussion about how long they are to serve. Ed suggested that the leadership in this group has been good. Ed also suggested that we keep everyone and maintain current appointments for chair and vice-chair. Dave suggested that Bob Holtfreter take over as vice-chair. The group supported that suggestion and Bob will act as vice-chair. Ray will continue as chair and was reappointed. Chief Bjork suggested that the appointments should be for one year, not two since we have staggered terms for group members. Chief Bjork asked the group if they were interested in continuing with that format. Ray asked that the group move on to the 2009 legislative analysis agenda item.

Legislative/budget - Chief Bjork advised that the document that had been passed out to the group was a synopsis of WDFW bills. Enforcement is directly involved with 54 of 56 bills assigned to the program. Ed explained that there were 1,284 bills introduced during the 2008-2009 legislative session with 112 bills on the list affecting WDFW. Every piece of legislation has an enforcement nexus. Ed advised that the legislative/budget is the same. Chief Bjork advised that WDFW was asked to reduce staff by 157 positions and \$30 million. Enforcement is being reduced by seven and two pilot positions or \$1.9 million. Chief Bjork advised that some of those are current vacancies. Ed advised that his clients were concerned over moving WDFW Enforcement to WSP. Chief Bjork advised that Oregon State Patrol is responsible for fish and wildlife enforcement and their system does not work; it is broken. Alaska is going to take fish & wildlife enforcement out of the state patrol and move it back into fish & wildlife. Ed advised that his client group is opposed to merging WDFW Enforcement with WSP and is lobbying the Governor’s Office. Chief Bjork advised that there is no

bill, but may be addressed in the budget. Ed suggested that we send those recommendations to the Director and send a copy to the Governor. Bob asked Chief Bjork if he supports Ed's thoughts. Chief Bjork advised that he does support that idea. The latest news on the fiscal woes is that it's was going to be about \$7.3 billion and that the economic indicators show that it may be higher. Chief Bjork advised that there is a governmental reform bill that will abolish boards and commissions, including the fish & wildlife commission. Director does not want to lose WDFW enforcement as well; we are more in line with our users, including counties and other governmental entities. Chief Bjork advised that WSP is funded out of transportation account; WDFW is paid out of the general fund and wildlife code. If you move WDFW to WSP, budget monies would not go with it. It's possible that legislatively we could be included with WSP through a "back door" option. However, a portion of that time may go to other arenas outside of fish & wildlife enforcement (traffic, moving violations). Ed asked if WDFW has a cost comparison. Chief Bjork advised that we must provide a fiscal impact. Ray Boone advised that what is being discussed are zero balances combining the two agencies. This accomplishes nothing. Ray asked if federal funds qualify. Chief Bjork advised that those funds would be prohibited to be moved unless it goes with an agency with a wildlife management plan. Ed suggested that Ray made a very good point. Bob asked if there are specific individuals pushing this merger behind the scenes. Chief Bjork advised, with the current budget problems, that the Governor has promised governmental reform. Chief Bjork explained that if you are comparing apples to apples, it would make sense to combine all law enforcement, but in the sense of managing WDFW's duties, it does not. Ray advised that when the Dept. of Fisheries and the Dept. of Game merged, there was supposed to be 177 officers, but that had been reduced. Ray advised that this merger will not work using this example. Robin suggested that most of your folks that WDFW hires are going to be geared towards the environment, opposed to those hired within WSP who are interested in capturing speeders or drunk drivers. Ron has a family member with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and there is the consensus that the system does not work there either. Dave made a motion that the Commission and Enforcement remain untouched. Ed suggested that politically, that would not be smart and that it would be better not to bring that to the group's discussion. Chief Bjork agreed that the advisory group is not to be involved with political issues under WDFW by laws. Ed advised that the WDFW Director cannot give advice on governance issues. The motion has been amended to just have Enforcement as a part of that discussion. The motion passed. **Action item – Ray will send a letter on behalf of the Enforcement Advisory Group to the Director regarding the merger of WDFW Enforcement and WSP.**

Chief Bjork discussed a few bills from the house and senate spreadsheet. Chief Bjork discussed the lead shot bill. The bill had originated from California's total ban on lead, including lead for fishing, to help protect the California condor. California's legislation also prohibited lead wheel weights. Chief Bjork advised that wolf hybrids are again a topic in the legislature. Bill would add them to the

prohibited dangerous animal statute RCW 16.32. Bob asked on the status of hunters under 14 and hunter education requirements. Ed advised that the legislation is a result of the woman that was killed after being mistaken by a hunter as a black bear. Chief Bjork advised that there is a conceptual proposal to combine DNR and WDFW. Chief Bjork advised that they may also include Park Rangers. Chief Bjork advised that the merger of natural resources with WDFW is a good concept and may add to Enforcement's staffing. Dave asked if this would be a part of a reduction of cuts. Chief Bjork advised that the budget would increase with absorbing DNR, but this may not work. Ray asked if they would primarily focus on forest. Chief Bjork advised that WDFW already does this. Parks does not have general authority to do fish and wildlife and do not write citations for violations per policy. Come June 30, 2009, there must be a 20% reduction in general fund, or \$4.4 million. Wildlife fund shortfall of another \$1 million and 20% reduction may increase in March's forecast. Chief Bjork advised that Enforcement has seen \$763 thousand in reductions. The retirements and vacant positions were held over till June of 2009 and therefore there would be no reductions. Ray advised if WDFW is looking at re-deployment of staff. Chief Bjork advised if you reduce service there's a lapse for service. Ron explained in Brewster that his staff constantly informs folks of reductions. For the new 09-11 biennium, it further reduces an additional 9 positions (7 officers and 2 pilots). Chief Bjork advised that there may be additional FTE's and money that will need to be cut, but there may also be additional retirements. Chief Bjork advised that discussions continue regarding having volunteers ride with officers to make sure that officers are not patrolling by themselves, thus increasing enforcement efforts. Robin asked about wildlife area managers and their commissions. Chief Bjork advised that they cannot be used anymore because those commissions have been removed. The Director can only name a fish and wildlife officer. Ed asked if a bill could be started to remove liability to allow rides.

Chief Bjork advised that during 2008, WDFW Enforcement fulfilled the State Parks requirements of 40 hours of training. WDFW completed boat inspection reports on boating safety and inspections and submitted those to State Parks. Chief Bjork advised that inspections were conducted by three or four different folks, but there is no money for each check. Chief Bjork explained that WDFW has not received any funds for boating safety and advised that the Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs will be dropping a bill that identifies WDFW as an accredited boating safety program.

Director's search – Chief Bjork advised that the WDFW Commission has explained to our interim Director Phil Anderson that he is there until June. Depending on the Commission, this may change, depending on internal conversations. Bob asked if no one is governing, what would happen. Chief Bjork advised that the laws would go back to the Director. An alternative would have regulatory powers reduced, including firing/hiring the Director. It was

suggested to take the money from the operating the Commission and inject back into the agency. Public process is much more expensive than it used to be.

Old Business

Travel expenses & group costs – Chief Bjork advised that expenses have increased and WDFW cannot continue. Chief Bjork advised that the group must double up meetings on the westside and then a couple on the eastside. Chief Bjork advised that the Region 2 Office in Ephrata or HQ Office in Olympia could be used. A question was asked in the group on whether a one meeting approach or two meeting approach would be better. Chief Bjork advised that two meetings would suffice. Ed suggested that having four meetings a year is not necessary. Dave suggested teleconferencing be an option. Chief Bjork advised that one meeting on the westside and one meeting eastside could be sufficient using this format. A teleconference was agreed upon to be the next meeting. Members will attend the teleconference call from their perspective regional office. The next meeting will be on May 2nd via teleconference. A supplemental meeting via face to face will be on September 12th possibly at Cabelas.

Direction of Enforcement Advisory Group – It was asked during the meeting what the future direction of advisory group should be. Chief Bjork advised that he still would like to see the group tackle guides and outfitters. Work has been done on fishing guides, but nothing on hunting guides. Chief Bjork advised that something needs to be worked up on hunting guides and that the issue needs to be addressed. Chief Bjork explained that something similar to the fishing, which has a license requirement and an avenue for suspension, w/reinstatement, would be a good start. Ed agreed that it should be picked up. Ed suggested that a draft bill should be drawn up. Dave suggested he has something already. Dave will provide a copy to the entire group. September is the target for the final draft.

Subcommittee Reports

Hunting pamphlet committee – Ray asked if anyone is interested in participating since they have lost members. Ron explained that he would participate. Ron is a part of the subcommittee. Jim advised that Outreach/Education continues to monitor its current projects for possible updating. Jim mentioned a reward/TIP program was an item we've not handled yet. Dave will forward a concept paper on crime stoppers/TIP program. There are no other subcommittee reports.

Conclusion

Scheduling of the next meeting – The next meeting will be held on January 24, 2009, location to be determined. Jim asked if we could place the Enforcement Questionnaire.

Requested Action Items:

- *PDF document of WSP cost savings*
- *Internet link to the national survey of hunters/fishers*
- *Chair letter to Director regarding merger of WDFW Enforcement with WSP*

Topics for Future Discussion:

- *Enforcement questionnaire*
- *Budget*
- *Legislative*

Next meeting: *Saturday, May 2, 2009, from 1000-1500, via video conference call. The agenda will be sent out before the meeting with information on topics for discussion.*